

**review 2****reviewer:** jonathan wurtz**status:** publishable with revisions

## can the center speak for the subaltern?

moving across the borders to decolonize philosophy for  
children (p4c)

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### **1) suitability of article to *childhood & philosophy***

The article provides an alternative framework for doing P4C through Spivak's subaltern and Giroux's Border Pedagogy. As such it falls under the purview of "research or essays on childhood, the relationship between childhood and philosophy, philosophical practice with children or some other relationship between childhood, education and philosophy". Furthermore, the article is well suited for the special issue. It's emphasis on colonialism, subaltern studies, and P4C explores the following questions from the CFP "what might an antiracist / decolonial p4/wc praxis look like?" and "how can we reconceptualize the relationships between facilitator and participants from within the context of institutional racism and colonialism?"

### **2) relevance and timeliness of the topic**

The article is very timely. It engages with a contemporary problem in P4C and builds on contemporary literature to provide an alternative framework inspired by Spivak and Giroux's respective works. The article also engaged with the issue of P4C in a globalized context, which according to the author, has been overlooked through more local forms of criticism. As such, the article provides both a problem for P4C practitioners to consider (especially in our globalized world) and a possible framework for addressing it.

### **3) argument structure and coherency**

**3.1) does the abstract adequately summarize the main issues addressed in the article?**

yes

**3.2) does the article fairly reflect current literature?**

The article engages with contemporary literature on P4C. One source that I was expecting to see but did not is Spivak's own "*An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*". Given the author's claim on rethinking P4C for a globally informed form of education, it seems like her insights would strengthen the author's reworking of P4C. It would also provide a deeper connection between Giroux's ideas and Spivak's criticism.

### 3.3) are the objectives of the article well-defined?

yes

### 3.4) are the ideas clear and well-developed?

The article's ideas are well developed, but can sometimes be lost in meaning behind very technical language and long descriptions.

### 3.5) are the arguments well-founded?

The argument is well-founded and follows a clear progression. The moments where the author compares border pedagogy with traditional Lipmanian p4c are especially helpful for understanding the novel approach.

There is one minor element that could be strengthened. The author states that Spivak "warned that attempts to represent the subaltern even sympathetic ones risk reproducing the very silencing they sought to undo" and "Spivak extended this concept into the postcolonial context, arguing that subalterns cannot fully speak for themselves because any attempt to represent them is mediated through elite structures of knowledge and power" and "Spivak highlighted the difficulty of retrieving a pure subaltern voice, showing that subalterns often remain subjects of others' representations." All of these quotes seem to highlight how *representing* the subaltern falls short of its intended consequences, especially by people in power.

Yet the author also put a lot of emphasis on the facilitator "as an ethical guardian, ensuring that the destabilizing and often uncomfortable work of border crossing occurs within a community of mutual respect and critical care." This seems to promote a friction by creating a hegemonic relationship between the participants and the facilitator. If the facilitator is the one with the power to shift or affirm the conversation through ethical responsibility, then the facilitator seems to have a clear position of power in the community of inquiry. In other words, it seems that the facilitator is the sole agent responsible for ensuring border pedagogy. The author does provide some relief from this possible issue when they mention that "Spivak's insistence on the structural impossibility of transparent representation thus serves as a crucial theoretical checkpoint, foreclosing any easy

narratives of inclusion and demanding instead a radical re-evaluation of the conditions under which speech becomes recognized as thought.” However, it is not clear how we can ensure that the facilitator can respect this boundary. Does the author simply hope that the facilitator can be genuinely aware of their own shortcomings? Or are there more systemic and community-oriented ways to balance the facilitator role as “ethical guardian”? Without some form of distributed responsibility, I am worried that the facilitator could unconsciously use their power as ethical guardian to reify the silence of the subaltern.

### **3.6) are the conclusions expressed clearly?**

Yes, the conclusion provides a succinct and well-articulated summary of the article’s main argument.

### **4) final assessment (result of the evaluation process):**

The paper is definitely high quality and could be published as is. However, a quick clarification of how we can ensure that the facilitator doesn’t fall prey to the problem discussed at the beginning of the paper would significantly help alleviate the apparent friction mentioned above.